

(MARTHA KEYS)

HART PAY EQUITY TESTIMONY
April 3, 1984

Thank you for inviting me here today, Congresswoman Oakar. You and your committee are to be commended for your efforts to assure equitable wages for all Americans. And there is no more important issue before us in that struggle than the issue of pay equity -- in the Federal sector of employment as well as in public and private sector workplaces throughout this country.

You have asked me to testify today as a candidate for President of the United States and I shall couch my comments to you and to the working women of this country in that context.

President Reagan consistently characterizes the record of his administration in terms of what he has done to restore the economy, to bolster the American family and to return to a higher sense of morality.

But his words carry a ring of incredible hypocrisy for the 49 million working women in the United States.

They know there is no greater moral issue in this country than institutionalized wage discrimination against women and minorities.

They know there is no greater family issue than the poverty forced on families headed by women by a sex-segregated system of employment.

They know there is no greater economic issue than simple pay equity and their right to be compensated for their work based on skills and responsibilities and effort and working conditions rather than on sex or color.

And they know the Reagan record on these issues is one of purposeful failure to lead, purposeful failure to respond to needs, purposeful failure to enforce the law.

In the last 30 years, the number of women in the labor force has more than doubled, while the number of men has increased by only one-quarter. Yet the basic ratio of female to male earnings has not changed.

The responsibilities of women, however, have changed drastically. Nearly 75 percent of working women are single, divorced or living with a man who makes less than \$15,000 per year.

Our modern society has assigned more than equivalent responsibility to women; but we do not pay wages to women that are equivalent to those paid to men performing jobs which require similar skill, responsibility, effort and working conditions.

The result is that forty-nine percent of female-headed households are below the poverty line. And in the last 20 years, the number of persons in poor families headed by women of color has increased by more than 50 percent.

From 1953 to 1983, the number of women in the labor force increased from a little over 19 million to well over 48 million. The percentage of women working increased from 34 percent to 53 percent, and the percentage of working married women with children under the age of six grew from 15.5 percent to an amazing 50 percent. The number of households maintained by females increased from 4 million in 1953 to 10 million in 1983.

These statistics represent fundamental changes in both the labor market, and in the roles of women in our society.

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Yet during this same thirty year period, women's earnings as a percentage of men's earnings actually decreased, from 63.9 percent to 61 percent.

With this recalcitrant wage gap, it is no surprise that having a job is far less likely to protect a woman than a man from poverty.

Looking at the 1982 Census Bureau figures, in the second chart, you can see that 22 percent of households headed by working women -- women with jobs -- are poor. And when you look only at families with children headed by working women, 29 percent are poor.

You can compare that to a 6 percent poverty rate overall for families where the head of the household works, but is not a working woman.

These figures translate into a stark reality in which a woman heading a family is nearly six times more likely to be poor than a man. A black woman heading a family is 10 times more likely to be poor than a white man, an Hispanic woman 11 times more likely.

And what has been the Reagan Administration's response to this kind of "progress"?

The landmark Supreme Court decision in the Gunther case opened the door to progress in pay equity through new litigation nearly three years ago.

It is a door that has collected cobwebs while standing ajar, waiting on an Administration unwilling to help working women cross the threshold to non-discriminatory earnings.

The response of the EEOC to Gunther was what it calls an "interim policy" to provide their field staff with guidelines on the processing of wage discrimination charges.

Three years later, EEOC has yet to promulgate permanent guidelines or a plan for testing the parameters of Title VII. The "interim" guidelines have been renewed over and over--but are not being followed by the EEOC and most EEOC field staffers don't even know they exist.

The EEOC under Reagan has not filed a single pay equity legal action under Title VII. Only in the last month, in response to Congressional hearings, has the EEOC even begun to consider the pile-up of charges filed since the Gunther decision.

Even worse, the Reagan Justice Department has threatened to roll back gains won by working women through litigation. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights William Bradford Reynolds announced opposition to the historic Washington State pay equity decision earlier this year without even reading transcripts of the case.

As an employer, the Federal government has taken absolutely no steps to eliminate bias in its pay system, even though the wage gap in the Federal sector is a known fact, with women earning less than 63 percent of the wages that men who work for the Federal government earn. I believe you were part of the committee, Madame Chairperson, which found, in examining the relationship between the percentage of men in an occupation in the Federal sector and the average salary of that occupation, that for each additional percentage point of men in the job category the average annual salary increases by \$176.

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Further, affirmative action regulations under the office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs which prohibit race and sex discrimination by Federal contractors have been eliminated.

Fortunately, the various states of our union are not all under Reagan control. Seventeen states have undertaken job evaluation studies of their civil service systems. More than half of the states have conducted extensive research into the sources of wage discrimination. Other states have approached the need for pay equity with creative legislation and policy solutions.

Many, many labor unions are bargaining successfully for pay equity and providing the funds and expertise for more and more legal actions.

It is possible. And it is being done. But it is being done without the help of the Federal government.

It is unthinkable, given the need and the demand for pay equity, that our nation's largest employer and the chief enforcer of our laws is providing no leadership on pay equity, ignoring its statutory obligation to enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and actually engaging in sex-based wage discrimination as an employer.

What has been President Reagan's response to the demand for pay equity?

His Administration has steadfastly responded that if women want to earn more money, they should enter male-dominated job categories.

My response -- and that of the laws of this land -- are that working women have the right to compensation free from discrimination in whatever job they hold.

To accomplish pay equity through job resegregation would require two out of three people in this country to change jobs and require women to give up years of seniority and experience in jobs they may want to work in.

No. What we should be doing is removing discrimination from all jobs, not generating simplistic rhetoric and ignoring the constitution of the United States.

What would Gary Hart do differently as President of the United States?

Let me say that my ideas on the subject of pay equity aren't very new. They are the same ideas I've fought for during my entire time in the Senate. They are the same ideas I testified on before you two years ago, Congresswoman Oakar.

They are ideas rooted in the straightforward belief that women should be paid equal wages for work of equal or comparable worth.

As President, I will provide the leadership and the muscle if necessary, to force the Federal government to fulfill its responsibility to working women.

I will enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Executive Order prohibiting wage discrimination based on sex.

I will appoint to the EEOC, the OFCCP, the Justice Department, the Department of Labor, the Office of Personnel Management and to other responsible Federal agencies, only individuals who are committed to aggressively eliminating wage discrimination and to the concept of pay equity as I just outlined.

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I will instruct the EEOC to immediately develop and implement a litigation plan for pay equity and to provide extensive direction and training to their field staff in the processing of wage discrimination charges.

I will instruct the Attorney General of the United States to fully support any and all litigation in the area of pay equity and wage discrimination and I will personally dismiss the attorney general if she or he does not carry out my orders fully.

No backsliding. No hesitation. No delays.

As President, I will personally see to it that the Federal government takes the lead as an employer by evaluating the Federal sector position classification system to determine if it contains bias, and by developing a bias-free evaluation system.

I have reviewed the many positive steps so many state and local governments and labor unions have taken to win pay equity for working women. It seems clear to me that in almost every instance, there was a committed individual who personally saw to it that the demand for equity was met.

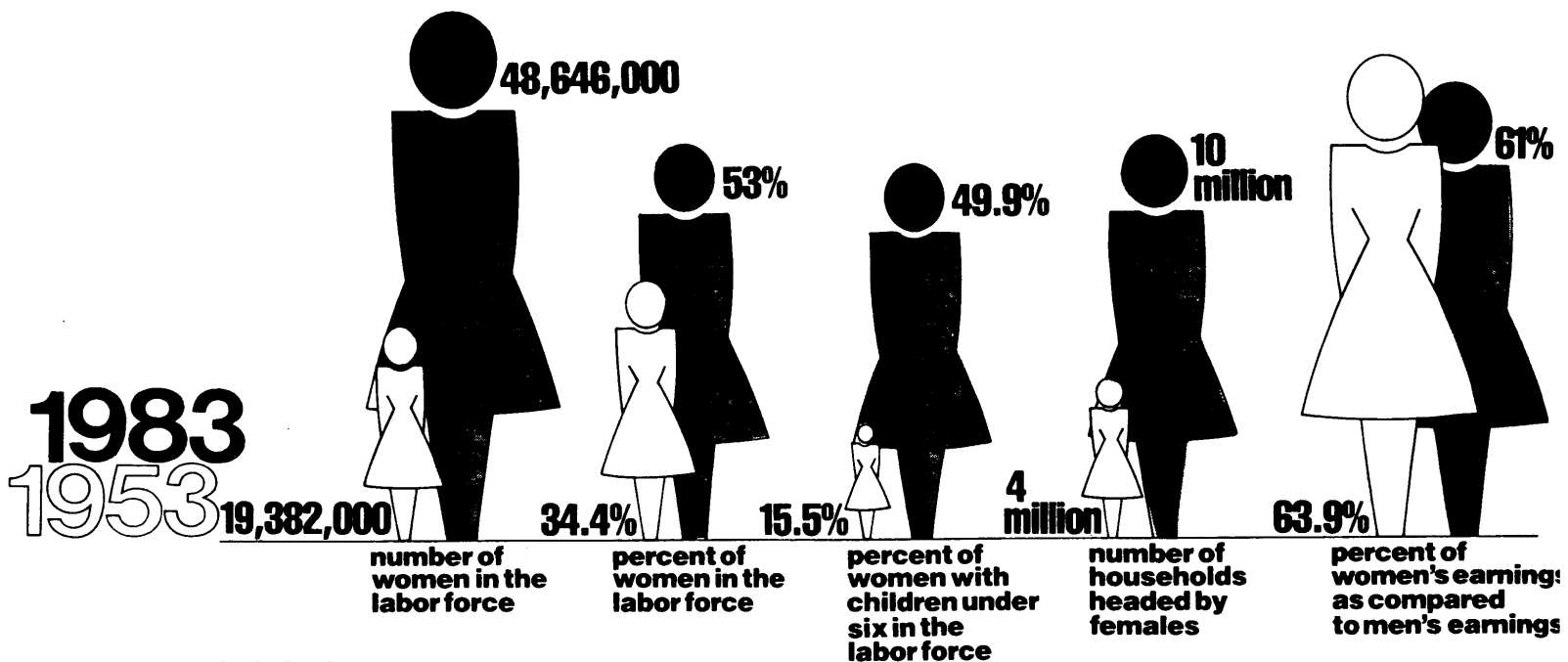
I want to know that in Gary Hart you have such an individual. One who has the commitment and the sensitivity to make it happen on a national scale.

In the Oval Office. In the Senate. Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.

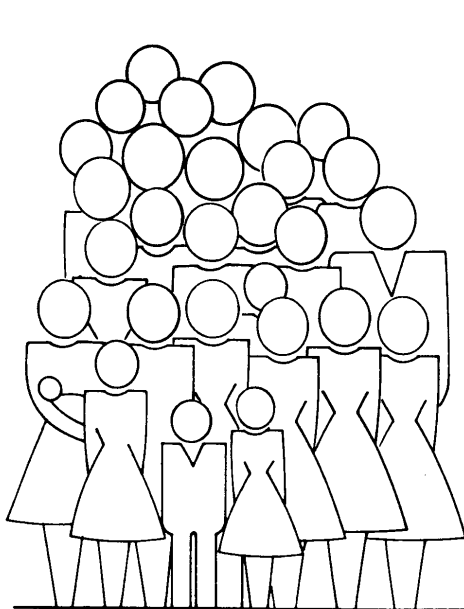
Thank you.

END

30 YEARS OF PROGRESS

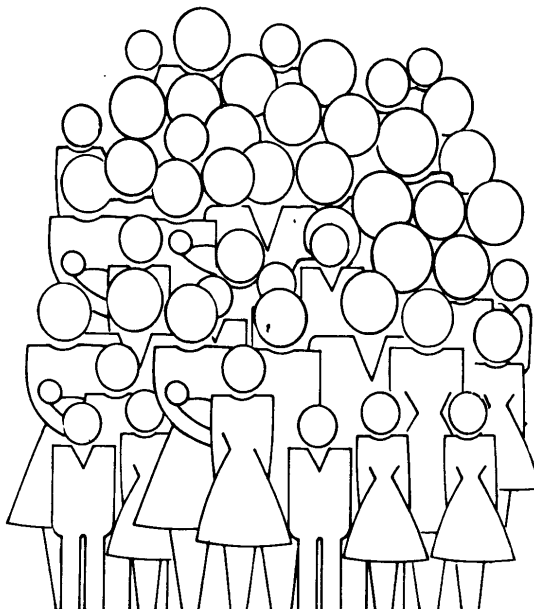


Having a job is far less likely to protect a female from poverty

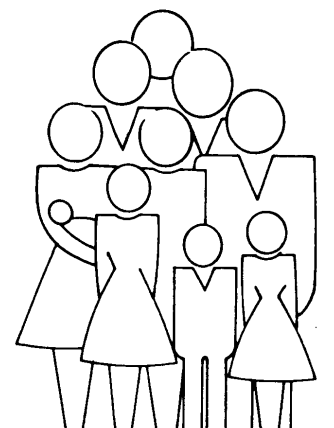


22% of families headed by working women are poor

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census



29% of families with children headed by working women are poor



6% of families where head of house is employed and not female are poor